

**{As Prepared for Delivery}**

**Earth Day 2006  
Pablo, Montana Eco-Friendly Housing**

**Thomas C. Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development  
April 24, 2006  
Remarks**

**Good afternoon.**

**It is a pleasure to be here and -- on behalf of President Bush and  
Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns -- to join you in celebrating this,  
the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.**

**36 years ago, America embraced a new environmental ethic.**

**I know that 1970 is already ancient history for some of the younger folks  
here, but it was just yesterday for those of us of a certain age. It was in  
1970 that President Nixon proposed the creation of the Environmental  
Protection Agency.**

**The first Earth Day was celebrated the same year.**

**That coincidence of timing was no accident. Clearly, a new consensus had emerged. Thirty-six years later, it still holds firm.**

**We have come a long way in the intervening years -- but there is more yet to do. So today, we have two purposes:**

- First, to recognize the hard work of many thousands of people in all walks of life who have helped create a cleaner world;**
- And secondly, to renew our own commitment to clean air, fishable and swimmable streams, and a healthier environment for all Americans.**

**That's a commitment we take seriously, one community, one business, one project at a time. As President Bush has put it on many occasions, we are called upon to be good stewards -- and if we take that call seriously ...**

**... Every day is Earth Day.**

**It's important to acknowledge that America's progress since that first Earth Day is significant. This effort *does* make a difference.**

**“In 1972, only 36 percent of the nation's assessed stream miles were safe for uses such as fishing and swimming; today, about 60 percent are safe for such uses.”**

**Even more dramatically, since 1970 America's population has increased 40%.**

**Energy consumption has increased 47%.**

**Vehicle miles traveled are up 171% and Gross Domestic Product is up 187%.**

**In short, we are a much bigger, more energy intensive, and significantly wealthier country than we were in 1970. Yet at the same time, total emissions of the six primary pollutants\* targeted by the Clean Air Act are DOWN 54%.**

**That is an astonishing achievement. We've grown the economy and grown the country while dramatically reducing pollution.**

**That progress continues in many ways, large and small. Developing new sources of environmentally friendly, renewable energy is one. Investing in water and wastewater treatment is another. Reducing harmful air and water emissions is a third.**

**But for individuals and families, simple energy conservation and energy efficiency – basically, good design – is perhaps the closest to home. That is why, this Earth Day, we are here in Pablo to celebrate high energy standards in housing.**

**The 12 units – or 6 duplexes – we are dedicating today are built to what is known as “Super Good Cents” standards, which are 30-40% more efficient than standard building requirements.**

**These units also utilize efficient geothermal heat pump water and space heating systems to meet over 80% of water and space heating needs from the heat of the earth.**

**Adding it all up, tenants should expect a savings of about 40% on their monthly utility bills. That's significant, and it will pay dividends for many years to come.**

**What SKHA – or Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority – have accomplished in Pablo is, in fact, a model for the nation.**

**So on behalf of President Bush and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, let me say simply that we are very proud to have been a partner with SKHA in this project.**

**We are committed to the future of rural communities, and we are committed to responsible environmental stewardship. It is indeed a privilege to stand with you today in advancing both of those goals. Congratulations to SKHA for a job well done, and thank you for inviting us to share this happy occasion with you.**